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ABSTRACT

This document profiles successful projects designed to develop Appalachia's labor force, economy, and educational opportunities. The 86 project profiles provided are grouped by the following five goals that were established for the region by the Appalachian Regional Commission: (1) Appalachian residents will have the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in the world economy in the 21st century; (2) Appalachian residents will have the physical infrastructure necessary for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life; (3) the people and organizations of Appalachia will have the vision and capacity to mobilize and work together for sustained economic progress and improvement of their communities; (4) Appalachian residents will have access to financial and technical resources to help build dynamic and self-sustaining local economies; and (5) Appalachian residents will have access to affordable, quality health care. Included in the document are profiles of projects in the following states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, Virginia, and West Virginia. Each profile includes a brief description of the project's objectives, participants, major activities, and outcomes, as well as the name, postal address, phone number, and e-mail address of project contact people. (MN)

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Ideas That Work

APPALACHIAN
REGIONAL
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Ideas That Work

Volunteers lay pipe along a rocky ridge to bring clean water to their tiny community in western Virginia. Helicopter pilots swoop critically ill infants from rural Alabama counties to Birmingham hospitals. Eighth-graders in Georgia use school-issued laptop computers to surf the Internet from their classrooms and their homes. West Virginia counties entice European tourists to hike their mountains, while small firms across the Appalachian Region penetrate markets across the globe.

These and other projects summarized in this small book portray a region on the move. They're today's examples of the flows of products, people, and information that have changed Appalachia from the time, 35 years ago, when the President's Appalachian Regional Commission described it as "a region apart" from the rest of America.

Then, economically speaking, Appalachia's eggs were in a very few baskets, each vulnerable to market shocks. The Region depended heavily on extraction of natural resources and agriculture. In the southern states, manufacturing meant mostly low-wage textile mills; in the northern Rust Belt, it meant heavy industry in aging plants employing fewer and fewer workers. From 1950 to 1960, a decade when national employment grew 15 percent, Appalachian employment actually declined. One in three Appalachians lived in poverty, a rate 50 percent higher than the national average. The Region's narrow mountain roads choked off the growth of commerce and industry, and constricted access to jobs, schools, and services. They were used by trucks hauling coal and timber to railheads, and, all too often, by some of the Region's most talented young people seeking better opportunities than they could find near home.

In creating the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) in 1965, Congress mandated a partnership between the federal government and the Appalachian states. ARC immediately spearheaded an

assault on isolation. Its first priority became the design and routing of 3,025 miles of modern, four-lane roads known collectively as the Appalachian Development Highway System (ADHS). The system's explicit purpose was economic and human development. Corridor routes were chosen with an eye to opening up choked-off areas, not adding capacity to places where traffic volumes were already high.

Today, about 2,300 miles of the ADHS have been completed. A 1998 study of completed portions of 12 ADHS corridors (about 1,400 miles) showed that they had made travel easier and safer, created at least 21,000 jobs, and generated nearly a billion dollars in economic development benefits. At the same time, the ARC partners invested in infrastructure: water and sewer projects, community facilities, and industrial parks. ARC and the states also invested in people directly, through adult education, health services, and leadership training.

The changes in Appalachia have been dramatic. Since 1969, employment in the Region has grown by more than 50 percent. The poverty rate has been cut in half; by 1990 it differed from the national rate by only two percentage points. Thanks to better water and better medical care, infant mortality has fallen by more than two-thirds. The percentage of Appalachian adults with at least a high school education has more than doubled, and for young adults (ages 18–24) this percentage is slightly higher than that of the rest of the United States. A 1995 study showed that a large number of Appalachian counties have grown significantly faster than a comparison group of their socioeconomic "twins" outside the Region.

Nevertheless, over 700 miles of the ADHS are still incomplete, and hundreds of communities still lack access to clean water. Of the Region's 406 counties, 111 remain economically distressed. Most

of these lie at the Region's center, which still suffers from isolation and the poverty that isolation fosters.

In 1996, ARC reinvented itself. That is, it adopted a strategic plan that re-affirmed its two historic priorities—a developmental highway program and an economic and human development program—and re-thought how to achieve them. The plan establishes goals under five headings: 1) education and workforce training, 2) physical infrastructure, 3) civic capacity and leadership, 4) dynamic local economies, and 5) health care.

Two years later, Congress and the president provided a steady and predictable source of funding for completing the ADHS by shifting its support to the federal Highway Trust Fund. The Transportation Equity Act for the 21st Century authorizes $450 million per year for the ADHS over five years.

This book shows some of the ways states and local communities are fleshing out the states' strategies for reaching the Region's goals in economic and human development. Some of the projects described here would have been impossible to imagine in 1965: using the Internet for land-use planning and telemedicine; finding new market niches for products such as specialty foods and high-tech equipment, and selling those products in Latin America, Europe, and Asia.

Yet the original vision of ending isolation remains intact, as does the federal-state-community partnership it brought into being. In that perspective, these stories are the latest chapters in a 35-year, remarkably successful effort to help Appalachian residents develop their capital and human resources.

GOAL ONE

Education and Workforce Training

Appalachian residents will have the skills and knowledge necessary to compete in the world economy in the 21st century.

GEORGIA

Expanding the Classroom: Towns County Middle School Laptop Computer Project

With only a few computers in the library, students in Towns County Middle School had little opportunity to develop computer skills, or use the Internet to research projects. Last fall, in the first year of a pilot program, Towns County gave every middle school student a specially designed laptop computer. The school also offers training for teachers, students, and parents, and it provides access to the Internet from school or home through a school-based network. Computers are now as ubiquitous as books in the classroom. Students, their parents, and teachers are finding their lives enriched in unexpected ways. Since every student has access to online research, teachers can assign more interesting and demanding projects. Parents are also learning computer skills and communicating with their children's teachers through email. Students and parents both report that the children are spending less time watching television and more time doing homework. Some of those parents—who make up 37 percent of the community's adults who have dropped out of school—may be inspired to resume their own education.

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Breathing New Life into Old Practices: Computer-Aided Design for the Granite Industry

Granite is the major industry and primary source of employment in Elbert County. Stonecutting, sandblasting, etching, and polishing are traditional skills that have, until recently, been carried out with traditional tools and line-of-sight measurements. Over the last decade, however, computer-aided design methods have entered the granite industry. Many draftsmen trained in traditional methods are retiring, and a new generation of employees will soon be needed. The Elbert County Comprehensive High School set up a new work-training program, so students can learn state-of-the-art computer-aided design methods from skilled industry artisans. Local industry is working with the school, which purchased 26 specialized computer stations and created a new etching class as well. In the first year, 40 students were taught computer-aided design and over ten learned specialized granite-etching skills.

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GOAL ONE PROJECTS

Learning by Exporting: Calhoun High School Youth Apprenticeship Program

High school business education is not always relevant and interesting to students. But at Calhoun High School, in Gordon County, students literally have a stake in the business and the value of their investment, which depends on their business management skills. Derris, Inc. was established as an import/export company in 1997, taking advantage of Calhoun's relationship with a secondary school in Scotland. The student-run company, which helps produce and market local handmade crafts such as jewelry and keychains, is expanding its international networking while selling numerous products to peers, teachers, and others in their community. Student employees maintain bookkeeping and personnel records, produce semi-annual reports, communicate with local media and community organizations, maintain a Web page and alumni newsletter, and work with the local business community. Above all else, students carry out business—allocating capital, negotiating for best prices, expanding product offerings and sales outlets, and reviewing job applications of interested juniors and seniors. So far, their investment has paid off; shares that sold for $10 each in 1997 are now worth over $34.

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Maximizing Success in the 21st Century: North Georgia Technical Institute Entrepreneurial Education Program

Small business startups have increased over the past few years and this trend will continue as new opportunities arise in the high-tech and service industries among others. The programs of study in a technical school environment are ideal for students who eventually want to start their own business. To help students and others along this path, North Georgia Technical Institute has developed an Entrepreneurial Education program. Participants gain a better understanding of the business world and what it takes to increase their chances for success once they start out on their own. The Entrepreneurial Education program not only includes credit and non-credit courses, but a Small Business Resource Center as well. The center is available to students and the general public to use as they further their plans for the American dream of "being your own boss." An entrepreneurial program is also offered through the Georgia Virtual Technical Institute. This program offers 16 courses, including entrepreneurship through the Internet.

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KENTUCKY

Creating Job Opportunities through Innovative Partnerships: Fresh Start Community Career Center

Two local industries—food processing/distribution and construction—provide the most job opportunities for residents of the eight counties served by the Fresh Start Community Career Center. Goodwill Industries of Kentucky is sponsoring relevant career development and occupational training services for residents of economically distressed communities, adults making the transition from welfare to work, and the youth. Unemployed and underemployed residents receive comprehensive job skills counseling, educational and computer training, and targeted vocational and occupational assistance. A nearby, recently built food processing plant provides interested students with experience in all aspects of the food service industry. In collaboration with area homebuilders and Habitat for Humanity, participants are offered classes and hands-on training in building and construction. Participants receive job placement and follow-up services for two years after they complete the program. Those interested in developing their own business are also eligible for Small Business Administration entrepreneurial assistance.

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MARYLAND

Providing Satellite Technology at Local Colleges to Improve Land-Use Planning: Global Positioning System

Many people know that satellite-based Global Positioning System (GPS) technology is revolutionizing navigation. Fewer may realize that it is also changing how surveyors and land-use planners carry out their work. GPS technology can be especially helpful in mountainous areas such as Appalachia. To provide the correct data nec-

essary for GPS surveying, officials in Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties, in western Maryland, have established survey-quality base stations at three community colleges, not only to train students, but also to make these services available for a fee to private companies. The base stations, one of which is part of a national GPS grid established by the U.S. Geological Survey, provide GPS data through the Internet to private surveyors, land planners, and other users. Renting field equipment to the industry brings in additional funds to support the GPS project.

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HELPING LOCAL GOVERNMENT PLANNERS: GEOGRAPHIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

Computerized Geographical Information Systems (GIS) is becoming an integral part of land planning and environmental management for county and municipal governments in western Maryland. This is the direct result of a state initiative making current computerized geographical data available to local governments. A key part of the initiative is a specialized GIS laboratory at Frostburg State University in western Maryland. Frostburg's Department of Geography provides low-cost GIS development, staff training, and student internships.

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NEW YORK

LINKING NETWORKS TO IMPROVE EDUCATION: LEATHERSTOCKING TELECOMMUNICATIONS CONSORTIUM

What is now the Leatherstocking Telecommunications Consortium began as several distinct networking efforts linking classrooms in multiple school districts together. It evolved into a sophisticated telecommunications system providing Internet access, distance learning, telemedicine services, and mobile teleconferencing for local governments and businesses. Over the last decade, quickly evolving technology has presented challenges and

opportunities for regional telecommunications planners. Students continue to benefit from "distant" classes while new technology expands the network's capabilities. The consortium has also helped local governments set up Internet sites providing citizen access to government information. An associated healthcare telecommunications network provides links to hospitals and outreach clinics that support nursing education and provides telemedicine assistance to public school nurses.

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TRAINING MACHINISTS FOR THE COMPUTER AGE: COMPUTER NUMERIC CONTROL MACHINE TOOL LABORATORY

In Allegany and Cattaraugus Counties, the New York Department of Labor forecasts a growing demand for machinists with Computer Numeric Control (CNC) training. The demand will be especially acute due to the retirement of current machinists, 50 percent of whom are age 50 or older. Alfred State College, at the request of local companies and the Alfred County Employment and Training Center, has launched an Advanced Machine Tool Certificate and Machine Tool Technology degree program. Specialized instruction will include CNC machine programming, CNC lathe operation, CNC milling machine operation, and CAD/CAM (Computer-Aided Design and Computer-Aided Manufacturing) processes. The County Employment and Training Center expects to be able to place at least 20 trained graduates a year. In addition, 30 to 45 students a year will be enrolled in machinist course work through contract courses with regional industries and training agencies.

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GOAL ONE PROJECTS

Linking Students: Whitesville School Business Partnership

Once a solid farming community, the rural hamlet of Whitesville in southeast Allegany County has fallen on hard economic times and offers limited job opportunities to its high school graduates. To stimulate stronger ties between students and local businesses, the Whitesville Central School District created a special school-business partnership that links art and technology classes with the needs of small businesses in the area. Equipped with computers and special software as a result of an Appalachian Regional Commission grant, the school's print shop provides students with an opportunity to learn the basics of commercial printing, graphics, and advertising while producing brochures and pamphlets for area businesses. The students not only gain valuable work experience but also have a chance to develop personal ties with local businesses.

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NORTH CAROLINA

Preparing Children for School: Partnership for Children (Region A Smart Start)

When North Carolina first funded Smart Start in 1993, many of the state's children were physically and socially unprepared for school. Nearly 20 percent lived in poverty, many were not receiving immunizations, the mortality rate was high, and almost 10,000 families were on waiting lists for subsidized childcare. Rather than mandate a solution to the myriad of problems, Smart Start required counties to establish local community boards, which would create and run local Smart Start programs. This was a challenge for all counties, especially for those in Appalachian North Carolina. However, most of the 29 Appalachian counties had programs in place by 1996, in part because the Appalachian Regional Commission provided funds to help them analyze, plan, and create partnerships to win funding. The Region A Partnership for Children was a pioneer in the statewide initiative and continues to help meet a wide range of needs—including childcare training, assistance and referral, health and dental services, parenting training, and coordinated family services.

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Creating New Campuses on the Information Highway: Alleghany Cyber Site

Students and communities in Alleghany, Wilkes, and Ashe Counties, in North Carolina, have not always had direct access to the resources of the state's university system. North Carolina is now leveraging those university resources by making information and classes available to students around the state. Alleghany High School is one of seven cyber campuses to be equipped with multimedia interactive computer equipment, linked to the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics, and the Internet through the high-speed, fiber optic North Carolina Information Highway. The campus is also linked to Wilkes Community College and provides distance-learning classes for high school students, teachers, and the general community. On-site computer training is also provided. The cyber campus, which is open evenings and weekends for public and business users, is serving approximately 1,450 students, 159 teachers, and over 1,000 adults (including businesspersons, government workers, and the general public) in its first year.

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Bringing Computers to Rural Day-Care Centers: Region 1 Early Childhood Development Regional Network

Though fast-changing information technology is transforming government and private-sector management practices, many nonprofits have limited equipment and expertise. Nor have these agencies—critical partners to government in providing many social services—provided computer literacy to the people they serve, who are least likely to have computers available elsewhere. These weaknesses were obvious during the 1996 planning meetings, as local community and government leaders struggled to develop telecommunications plans in the first phase of North Carolina's Connect NC initiative. The leaders recommended creation of the Early Childhood Development Regional Network, that provided networked computers in the 12 day-care centers overseen by the Northwest Child Development Council. The network is transforming management of the centers—office software is standardized; long-distance costs cut; the central kitchen staff knows how many meals to prepare every day; time to process accounts payable has been trimmed; and inventory and supply management is centralized. Children are now learning with the help of computers. The staffs are now computer literate, and so are many parents who take advantage of after-hours access to computers and the Internet.

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GOAL ONE PROJECTS

Making College More Accessible: New Century Scholars

Many rural high school students are qualified to go to college, but do not for a variety of reasons. Some are reluctant to become the first in their family ever to go to college. Others worry about the costs and feel pressure to enter the full-time workforce immediately after high school. New Century Scholars, a cooperative effort of the business community, the public schools, and local colleges is providing a new educational path for students in southwestern North Carolina. Starting in the seventh grade, students selected to participate agree to meet education and conduct standards that will entitle them to a guaranteed scholarship to college. Initiated in 1995, over 500 New Century Scholars now are attending area schools. Their number increases by 120–140 students each year, depending on the amount of money raised to support scholarships. Scholarship money is raised in the community. (In 1995 residents in one county pledged money for 30 scholarships within 30 minutes of being presented with the opportunity.) The program includes intervention with the selected students as well as parent involvement. Students who perform satisfactorily in high school attend the community college. If they complete an associate's degree at the college, their final two years are spent at the university. The incentive to stay in school also is reducing dropout rates. In 1999, the New Century Scholars program leveraged a $2.4 million grant from the U.S. Department of Education to expand the program to even more potential scholars.

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OHIO

Improving Training in Health Care: Joint Vocational School

In an area with high unemployment, growth in healthcare-related jobs offers students hope for a stable financial future. Discouraged by the number of students enrolling in medical or dental training programs at the Scioto County Joint Vocational School, area health care advisors recommend that the school emphasize health care training and upgrade its equipment to meet training needs. With support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the school purchased new equipment including an X-ray machine, dental chairs, treatment con-

soles, and dental lab stations. As a result, 225 eleventh- and twelfth-grade students and 495 adult students are benefiting annually. High school students and an expanded group of adults are enrolled in curriculums which include: nurse assisting; administrative medical assisting; dental assisting; practical nursing; diversified medical occupations; and nurse aide/home health aide-phlebotomy.

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KEEPING COMPUTER SKILLS UP TO DATE: SWISS HILLS VOCATIONAL SCHOOL COMPUTER LAB

Local companies in Monroe, Belmont, and Noble Counties need employees with skills and experience using current business software. But the Switzerland of Ohio Local School District has limited donated computer equipment that can not accommodate current operating systems or common spreadsheet, word processing, or graphics applications. In each of Swiss Hills Vocational School's three business labs, students have to share five outdated computers. So the district used grant funds to purchase 45 computers and related peripheral equipment, sufficient to provide every student a computer with local network and Internet access, as well as current business software. Not only do high school students benefit but 105 adults also can be accommodated in seven adult-education classes offered in the new computer labs. And local companies—which once had to send employees to a distant location for specialized training—can now use the vocational school facilities.

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GOAL ONE PROJECTS

Motivating More Students to Attend College: Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education

Residents of the 20 Appalachian Ohio counties attend college far below the state average and at only one-half the national rate. A 1992 study identified real and perceived barriers to students, many of them the result of misinformation and poor communication between schools, students, and parents. Many students felt themselves not capable of college or considered college too expensive. The Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education (OACHE), a consortium of the ten public colleges and universities serving the region, was established to motivate more students to attend college. OACHE sponsors access grants for members and local schools and the funded projects vary in location, grade level, and approach. Teachers are trained to keep students informed and help them make critical career and education decisions. Students are encouraged to visit college campuses and can receive help with college applications and financial aid forms. Newcomerstown High School has seen its graduate post-secondary enrollment increase from 28 percent average—over the decade before the program started—to 72 percent in 1996 and 80 percent in 1999. Last year the Community Colleges of Appalachia (CCA) opened the North Central Appalachian Center for Higher Education at Bluefield State College to sponsor OACHE-like programs with partner schools in West Virginia and Appalachian Maryland.

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Expanding Computer Learning to Meet Specific Industry Needs: Jefferson Community College Engineering Computer Project

Based on successful recruiting efforts in Steubenville, Ohio, several regional manufacturing and design firms concluded that Jefferson Community College in Steubenville is an excellent source for highly motivated and competent employees. Hoping to hire even more employees, the firms recommended that the college update its Computer-Aided-Design (CAD) Laboratory and establish an Engineering Computation Laboratory. In its first year, the new CAD facility directly benefited over 220 design students. Over 1,100 students were served by the

Engineering Computation Laboratory, through new courses in computer science as well as significant enhancements to the College's advanced mathematics, science, and engineering curricula.

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TENNESSEE

BUILDING A CENTER FOR NEW OPPORTUNITIES: MARION COUNTY ADULT EDUCATION AND SKILLS TRAINING CENTER

In the early 1990s, one-third of the adult population in Marion County did not have a high school diploma and the dropout rate for high school seniors was almost 7 percent. In 1991 the county began construction of the Marion County Adult Education and Skills Training Center. Over 500 people have received their general equivalency degree or adult high school diploma and up to 300 people a day now use the facility. The facility houses the adult education program, vocational rehabilitation services, satellite offices for the Private Industry Council, the Department of Human Services, and Chattanooga State Community College. Through basic education classes, college-level courses, and direct employment training, many residents of Marion and surrounding counties are better equipped to enter the job market or improve their current employment.

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GOAL ONE PROJECTS

VIRGINIA

Meeting a Diversity of Needs: Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center and Regional Training and Conference Center

In southwest Virginia local leaders in business, government, and education all agreed they faced a similar problem: lack of quality space for meetings, conferences, new college course offerings, and employee training programs. To meet diverse needs, a new state-of-the-art complex was built. Classroom facilities include interactive telecommunications technology. A multi-purpose conference hall can hold up to 1,500 persons. Using satellite and in-class instruction, partner schools have expanded their executive and adult training as well as courses for degree-seeking students. Numerous local companies have conducted employee training; professional continuing education seminars have been provided; public meetings have been held; and business and trade shows have been hosted. The Regional Training and Conference Center satisfies a cluster of needs that were unlikely to be met individually.

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Developing Appalachia's Future Lawyers: The Appalachian School of Law

A new law school is part of a long-term economic and civic revitalization effort in Appalachian Virginia. The long-dominant coal industry continues to decline, but community leaders in Buchanan and surrounding counties believe the Appalachian School of Law will help build local expertise for a more diverse, complex economy. Initially housed in buildings made available by public school consolidation, the new law school begins its third academic year this fall. Attorneys are historically a source of civic leadership and the Appalachian School of Law seeks to attract students who will return to their communities. The school is on course to receive provisional accreditation from the American Bar Association, after site visits and follow-up discussions with the Association's Accreditation Committee. New faculty members have been added as the school continues to grow, and its Invest in Tomorrow development campaign has already secured cash donations and pledges of over $5.7 million.

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WEST VIRGINIA

Increasing Work-Based Skills: Clay County Public Schools

High school students in rural Clay County had little opportunity to develop work-related skills, either in school, local businesses, government agencies, or community organizations. Only 25 percent of eligible students received work-based experience in the existing school-to-work program, and only 2 percent were able to do so at sites within the county. Clay County school officials decided to employ a work-site facilitator to identify potential work sites, train work mentors, and develop a format for individual training plans to enhance student learning. In addition, 12 computer workstations were purchased to improve in-school work-related training. Now, around 175 students annually have access to workplace computer simulation and approximately 100 students a year can obtain paid or volunteer work experiences at sites off campus.

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GOAL TWO

Physical Infrastructure

Appalachian residents will have the physical infrastructure necessary for self-sustaining economic development and improved quality of life.

GEORGIA

Creating a Cleaner, Safer Environment: Lookout Mountain Sewage Project

Built on shallow, rocky soils unsuitable for on-site sewage disposal, the City of Lookout Mountain in Madison County struggled to grow without a central sewage treatment facility. The sewage problem became so acute that health authorities had to deny requests for permits to build septic tanks for new residential and business development. As a result, new homes were not built and many businesses were unable to expand, including Rock City Gardens, a popular area tourist attraction. This all changed, however, the sewage is treated by the Moccasin Bend Sewage treatment facility in Chattanooga. The project increased opportunities for commercial and residential development, and the system has reduced pollutants flowing off Lookout Mountain into Georgia and Tennessee streams.

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KENTUCKY

Wiring for Business, Education, and Health: Big Sandy Regional Telecommunications Center

Determined that the new information highway not bypass Pike County and the Big Sandy area of eastern Kentucky, community leaders created the Big Sandy Regional Telecommunications Center. Operated by the nonprofit Big Sandy Telecommuting Services, Inc., the center currently provides a variety of services including hands-on computer, network, and Internet training and certification; coordination of remote teaching and teleconferencing; and business support services. Partners in the Telecommunications Center include the Pikesville College School of Osteopathic Medicine, whose Telemedicine Services and Learning Center at the site will soon

serve faculty, students, and the public. In addition, to support new business development, the new facility is taking on the additional role of serving as a business incubator: providing office space and access to shared personnel and equipment to several new emerging enterprises.

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MARYLAND

BUILDING A NEW LOCAL ECONOMY: ADVANCED TECHNOLOGY CENTER AND TECHNICAL INNOVATION CENTER

In the mid-1980s, after Fairchild Industries closed its aircraft manufacturing operations, people in Washington County began working to develop and attract new high-tech industries. The Advanced Technology Center was opened at Hagerstown Community College in 1990, and the Technology Innovation Center, a major $2 million addition, was completed in 1994. By 1995 six high-tech enterprises were using the new facilities in such diverse fields as chemicals, electronics, and computer software. At the center, entrepreneurs can take an idea through the stages of computer-aided design, development, test-marketing, and production. In addition, local businesses have access to advanced technical resources as well as state-supported economic development agencies. Ultimately, local officials say, the center will lead to a better-trained, more adaptable workforce.

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Building on History for a More Prosperous Future: Canal Place

Recognizing Cumberland's role in American history as the western terminus of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal, community leaders created Canal Place, the state's first heritage area initiative. The Canal Place Preservation and Development Authority secured state and federal funding to preserve and renovate the Western Maryland Railway Station, originally built in 1913. The project also preserved over 100 structures in the adjacent Downtown Cumberland Historic District. Today, Canal Place is a critical part of the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal National Historical Park, combining historic preservation, recreation, and education with economic development strategies that benefit all of Allegany County.

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MISSISSIPPI

Shifting Strategies to Create More Jobs: Yellow Creek Inland Port Industrial Site

Once planned to support a nearby nuclear power generating plant, a large rural site in Tishomingo County is now thriving despite several economic setbacks. Although the nuclear plant project was discontinued before completion, and a NASA rocket motor facility on the same site was terminated as well, the port has quietly grown into a valuable economic asset for the region. Recognizing the need to have more control of their economic fate, local leaders created a plan to seek broader-based economic development opportunities and established the Yellow Creek Inland Port. Located at the mouth of the Tennessee River and Tennessee-Tombigbee Waterway, the port's ability to provide businesses with low-cost transportation for bulky products has attracted the attention of several new and potential industries. To date, private industry has invested more than $4 million at the port and created more than 100 high-paying jobs. The Appalachian Regional Commission funding has been crucial to providing water and sewer service and road improvements necessary to make the private investments possible.

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GOAL TWO PROJECTS

NEW YORK

Communities Working Together: Randolph and East Randolph Wastewater Facilities

Recognizing that poor sewage disposal was threatening the health and economic well-being of many area residents, the small, adjacent villages of Randolph and East Randolph in Cattaraugus County decided to work together to resolve the problem. Surveys showed that residences, businesses, and schools in both communities relied on individual septic tanks for sewage disposal, and that tight soils and a high water table resulted in the frequent failure of septic systems. Together, the communities hired an engineering firm to design a system meeting their needs and were able to obtain state and federal funds for construction. The partnership resolved a serious public health problem, eliminated runoff into adjacent waterways and generated new commercial and residential development.

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NORTH CAROLINA

Building Affordable Homes: Western North Carolina Housing Partnership

Leaders from area governments, local development districts, and several area businesses came together in 1988 to develop affordable housing for older adults in Appalachian North Carolina. A nonprofit 501c3 consortium was formed to help meet the needs of seniors and other special populations. Since then, the partnership has provided technical assistance, housing counseling, and application preparation for those in need. In addition, the group has participated in the development of new housing units. It serves as a general partner on 60 rental units; as service consultant on a 24-unit tax credit/rental production project; as member of a limited liability

company on a 48-unit complex for the elderly; and as owner/developer for two eight-unit shared living residences. It is currently a partner in two additional multi-family developments that will create another 88 units of housing.

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LENDING HANDS: CONNELLY SPRINGS SELF-HELP WATER PROJECT

Until recently most citizens of Connelly Springs in Burke County got their drinking water from wells that were highly mineralized and unreliable in times of drought. A local water corporation agreed to supply water if distribution lines were installed. With support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Town of Connelly Springs secured public and private funding assistance, supplemented by voluntary community labor. The community saved over $40,000 in normal labor costs. This was the first self-help water project in North Carolina and a model for other communities in the state.

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MAKING DRINKING WATER SAFE: MADISON COUNTY STRAIGHT PIPE ELIMINATION PROJECT

In Madison County, health authorities became concerned when local water basins, serving 75 percent of the county's residents, became endangered by the discharge of raw sewage into local streams. The discharges came primarily from the estimated 25 percent of residences without septic systems or with systems that were failing. To deal with the serious health problem, local officials first surveyed the area to locate problem discharges and determine how best to bring residential and commercial systems into compliance with current requirements. Next, they raised public awareness about the health problem and let residents know about a 1997 state amnesty program that encouraged straight-pipers to report themselves. Finally, they helped the county obtain $903,000 from the North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund to capitalize and administer a revolving loan and grant program to help lower-income people replace their straight pipes and failing septic systems.

Last summer, the loan and grant program began to assist the county in following up on the hundreds of people identified through the amnesty program as possible candidates for loans to install or repair septic systems.

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SOLVING A WATER CRISIS WITH HELP FROM VOLUNTEERS: MARSHALL WATER PROJECT

In 1992 the Town of Marshall lacked funding to make critical improvements to its water system, including connecting its wells to a central distribution system and making improvements to its reservoir. Facing a water shortage and the possible shutdown of its water system, the town sought outside help. With support from the Appalachian Regional Commission and the North Carolina Small Towns Environment Program, the town was able to purchase materials and use volunteers who lived in the town to lay a water line from the wells into the town's water system. The reservoir's old cover was removed; the reservoir cleaned out, and a staging area was cleared for replacing the cover with a geodesic dome. The self-help effort saved an estimated 30 percent of the total cost of the project and stretched the town's available resources far enough to meet its immediate water system needs.

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OHIO

INCREASING WATER CAPACITY FOR A GROWING INDUSTRY: LETART WATER LINE PROJECT

Each year nurseries and greenhouses in the Letart area of Meigs County produce over $5 million in tomatoes, hanging baskets, and flats of flowers. These products, sold primarily to large national retailers such as Wal-Mart and Kmart, have become a substantial part of the local economy. Recently, however, community officials became concerned about the large quantities of water required by these businesses and the potential shortage of water for farms and residents alike. With support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, Meigs County

officials solved the problem by completing the Letart Water Line. With its larger water pipes and a new pumping station, the project has helped to ensure that a revived nursery industry can continue to grow and create new jobs.

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SAVING JOBS BY PRESERVING A RAIL LINE: AUSTIN POWDER RAIL PROJECT

When CSX Railroad announced plans in 1991 to abandon nine miles of track serving the Austin Powder Company, local leaders in Vinton County were concerned. The powder plant was the county's largest private business, providing more than 260 local jobs. Working closely with Austin Powder officials, community leaders decided to try to save the line and sought support from the city of Jackson, in adjacent Jackson County, which already had acquired over 50 miles of track from CSX in an effort to sustain local industry. The city of Jackson secured funding to acquire the Austin Powder line and arranged for the Indiana and Ohio Shortline Railroad to operate and maintain the track. Instead of closing, the Austin Powder Company invested $4 million to expand its plant, creating 50 new jobs. The rail acquisition helped stabilize the local economy, which had a poverty level close to 50 percent when the project was originally proposed. The rail acquisition program has maintained rail service to over ten local companies, currently employing over 1,000 people.

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CREATING NEW INDUSTRIES ON OLD INDUSTRIAL SITES: NEW BOSTON INDUSTRIAL PARK

Many old industrial sites are environmentally contaminated and have come under the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Superfund program. These properties are generally not available for any new use until they undergo environmental cleanup, which can be expensive and delayed for years by technical and legal disputes. Changes in the Superfund program, however, encourage cleanup sufficient to allow continued or new industrial uses. The Brownfields initiative promotes industrial and economic development, and the New Boston Industrial

GOAL TWO PROJECTS

Park in Scioto County is a model for the reuse of contaminated industrial property. The former location of a steel company, long abandoned, was heavily contaminated. After a portion of the property was decontaminated, a new rail spur encouraged two industrial operations to operate in the park.

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PENNSYLVANIA

IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGY FOR ECONOMIC REVITALIZATION: MEADOW RIDGE BUSINESS PARK

To retain existing businesses and attract new employers, the Greene County Industrial Development Authority, in cooperation with the Regional Industrial Development Corporation of Southwestern Pennsylvania, designed the 108-acre Meadow Ridge Business Park near Interstate 79. The park is an essential component of the Greene County Strategic Plan for economic revitalization. Sixty acres of developed land have been opened under the first phase, which includes construction of a two-lane access road as well as water and wastewater utilities. The park's first corporate client has hired over 50 employees. Within three years, the project is expected to create 470 jobs.

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BEST COPY AVAILABLE

Building a Water Line to Maintain Jobs: Cumberland Mine Water Project

The 500 workers at the Cumberland Mine in Greene County faced the likelihood of layoffs unless the mine operation could expand its access to potable water. Mine officials said water shortages threatened operations at two existing mine portals as well as at a proposed third portal. With support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, community leaders approved and built a new ten-mile water line that provided additional water to the mining operations as well as to 51 private residences and several new businesses near the Interstate 79 interchange in Kirby. The company operating Cumberland Mine agreed to pay monthly user fees offsetting most debt charges for the project, which included a pump station, a large storage tank, and 45 fire hydrants. Residential user fees also help offset costs of the project.

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TENNESSEE

Replacing a Bridge to Save Jobs: Hickman Creek Bridge Replacement

In 1993 state engineers inspected a deteriorating railroad bridge over Hickman Creek in Putnam County and concluded that the bridge needed to be replaced as soon as possible. Engineers expressed concern about the condition of a 147-foot deck plate girder originally built in 1888. Not only was the bridge's wooden material deteriorating rapidly, but the structure also was severely disrupting the water flow of Hickman Creek. Putnam County economic development officials also expressed concern. Rail traffic in Putnam County had increased dramatically, and without the bridge replacement, rail service would come to an abrupt halt, putting at risk hundreds of jobs, including many in the area's wood products industry. One local firm, Consolidated Forest Products, alone employed over 100 workers. With support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, the Nashville and Eastern Railroad Authority raised the funds to replace the bridge, saving many local jobs and allowing several local companies to expand.

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GOAL TWO PROJECTS

VIRGINIA

Overcoming Mine-Related Water Safety Issues: Grundy/Slate Creek Regional Water Project

Largely depending on cisterns, wells, and springs for their water, residents of 160 homes outside Grundy in Buchanan County recently became concerned when mining activities in the area depleted and polluted these resources. County officials sought funding from a variety of sources to design and build a comprehensive water distribution system to correct the problem. Besides homes near Grundy, the system also serves a number of residences across the border in West Virginia. The recently completed project is expected to improve the quality of life for hundreds of area residents, ensuring a dependable supply of water that meets current safety standards.

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Empowering Rural Residents to Help Themselves: Smith Ridge Self-Help Water Project

For a hundred years or more, the residents of Smith Ridge—a rural town of about 150 people in Tazewell County—got their water from cisterns, springs, or wells. When the wells ran dry in the summer, some families were forced to haul in fresh water from out of town in a fire truck. Given its small population and remote, mountainous location, the town saw little prospect to improve its water supply. In the summer of 1998, however, all of that changed as a result of an innovative program that helps people in small towns help themselves. With support from the state's Department of Housing and Community Development, residents were able to participate in the national Small Towns Environment Program, operated by the nonprofit Rensselaerville Institute. Under the program residents banded together and built a seven-mile water-line extension to serve their homes. More than 60 residents, including nearly every able-bodied adult in the town, volunteered to help. The end result: the project cost about $250,000—a savings of 75 percent compared to the original estimated price of over $1 million, and the extension took only three months to complete as opposed to the expected 18 months.

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WEST VIRGINIA

Diversifying a Local Economy: Mingo County Wood Products Industrial Park

Faced with a 1998 unemployment rate of over 12 percent, Mingo County officials last year announced their intention to diversify their local economy, which in the past has been largely dependent on the coal industry. Part of the county's strategy, as outlined in a new comprehensive community development plan, was to develop the Wood Products Industrial Park on 650 acres of a reclaimed former surface mine. The project calls for construction of a public water supply, including a ten-mile water line, to the industrial park and to 22 area residences, which in the past have depended on individual wells. The project is expected to generate 100 new jobs.

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GOAL THREE

Civic Capacity and Leadership

The people and organizations of Appalachia will have the vision and capacity to mobilize and work together for sustained economic progress and improvement of their communities.

ALABAMA

Developing Job Training to Meet Individual Needs: Scottsboro Appalachian Community Learning Project

In 1993 a Chamber of Commerce survey found that 42 percent of Jackson County's adults had not earned a high school diploma and 17 percent were functionally illiterate. Alarmed, business and community leaders formed the 21st Century Council to promote adult education with a special emphasis on job training. Since then, staff and volunteers at the Council's Adult Career Center have had success working one-on-one with individuals seeking employment training. By focusing on the barriers to employment unique to each client, and working extensively with employers and social service agencies, the Center has helped over 30 people find work. The program has won the praise of clients—including many formerly on welfare—and has had strong support from local business and community groups.

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Building Community Strength by Preserving the Past: Aliceville Museum and Cultural Arts Center

When the Appalachian Regional Commission-sponsored Aliceville Downtown Revitalization Project brought diverse representatives of the community together, they embarked on an ambitious project to preserve unique aspects of Pickens County history. The Aliceville Museum and Cultural Arts Center was the local community's creation, realized step-by-step with lots of hands-on help by area residents. A mural based on a 1944 sketch by a German prisoner-of-war commemorates the community's unique role in World War II. Other exhibits honor Pickens County veterans from the Revolutionary War to the present. Farm equipment and antiques recall a life on the farm fast fading from view. The center already is seeing positive results from these efforts. Attendance in the first half of 1999 was up 30 percent over the same period last year. Reconciliation was the theme in March 1999, as U.S. Army guards and former German inmates from the Aliceville Prisoner-of-War Camp returned for the annual Dogwood Festival.

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GOAL THREE PROJECTS

Encouraging the Best and the Brightest to Return Home: Hale Builders of Positive Partnerships Leadership Training

Concerned that many high-achieving high school students do not return to live in Hale County after college, members of the Hale Empowerment and Revitalization Organization (HERO) created a youth leadership program to encourage young people to build personal and professional lives in this distressed area of western Alabama. Over 20 student leaders from county high schools were chosen for the Builders of Positive Partnerships (BOPP) program. These "Hale BOPP Comets" are receiving training in leadership, management and marketing, and local history and culture, and are taking part in at least three local service projects. The University of Alabama, Auburn University, and Shelton State Community College are cooperating in activities that will build problem-solving skills, encourage responsibility, and reveal the value of long-term community commitment.

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KENTUCKY

Creating Partners for Positive Change: Kentucky Appalachian Commission

Kentucky is taking a strategic approach to local and regional issues in the Appalachian counties of the state. Through the Kentucky Appalachian Commission, supplemented by the citizen-based Kentucky Appalachian Advisory Council, diverse interests are pursuing the common goal of regional development. The commission includes representatives of federal and state agencies with control or influence over regional resources; county and municipal government representatives, as well as members of the state legislature; citizens; and representatives of interested and affected stakeholder groups. The commission, with offices and staff in Hazard, considers proposals affecting the region, facilitates regional coordination, provides independent leadership and analysis, and sponsors hearings, seminars, and policy studies on relevant issues. Working closely with the governor's office, the commission makes recommendations to the governor and his cabinet on strategies to enhance Appalachian community and economic development.

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MARYLAND

Providing Greater Access to the Internet: WMDnet

Beginning with initial efforts to provide distance learning opportunities to western Maryland high school students, WMDnet helped develop Internet access for the public sector in three counties. It stimulated entry of private Internet service providers into the region and has been the focal point of various computer and telecommunications projects that benefit students and improve use of public information. In Hagerstown, a fiber optic network links numerous agencies and the Internet. In Allegany County, "Allconet" links agencies, schools, nonprofits, and colleges while providing net access. In Garrett County, the Garrett Rural Information Cooperative (GRIC) provides Internet access to private and public sectors. The Western Maryland Internet Lab at Frostburg State University is one of a number of associated initiatives that continue to evolve from this ongoing work.

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Managing for Success: Regional Main Street Program

Fearing that their downtown business redevelopment efforts might be piecemeal and haphazard without consistent managerial leadership, two western Maryland towns have engaged full-time Main Street managers. The managers in Cumberland (Allegany County) and Oakland (Garrett County) initiate and coordinate a variety of administrative, management, and promotional activities. Working closely with volunteer organizations, as well as business tenants and property owners, they are full-time advocates and sources of information on downtown facilities, programs, and opportunities. The managers help both downtown revitalization programs avoid the burnout and inconsistency which plague many volunteer organizations, while bringing new visibility, activity, and commerce to Cumberland and Oakland.

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GOAL THREE PROJECTS

Making Strategic Use of Technical Assistance: ARC/Consolidated Technical Assistance Program

Maryland is unique among the 13 Appalachian states in its use of the Consolidated Technical Assistance (CTA) Program to help finance planning and development initiatives throughout Appalachian Maryland. Since 1991, the CTA Program has funded over 100 projects, ranging from biotechnology marketing plans to traditional industrial park development. Throughout the state's three Appalachian counties, state and local government officials have implemented these projects to address growth management, comprehensive planning, economic development, and environmental protection. Consistent with the state's policy of "Smart Growth," the ARC/CTA Program in Maryland emphasizes self-sustaining economic development and job creation.

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NEW YORK

Making Services More Efficient: Southern Tier West Community Assistance Program

Local governments in three southwestern New York counties are providing better services to their communities in Allegany, Cattaraugus, and Chautauqua Counties, thanks to the Southern Tier West Community Assistance Program. Local officials and employees have received specific training and technical assistance to help them serve the people in their communities. They are also working together to provide more efficient services. Seventy-eight local governments are using their combined purchasing power to save money for taxpayers and local municipal records management has been made more effective and less costly through cooperative projects. Since 1994, the Southern Tier West Program, in cooperation with local universities, has brought together local government officials and employees to share up-to-date information on the best management practices. Numerous other seminars, workshops, and conferences have provided local leaders with information needed to improve community services. The Community Assistance Program has been so popular and effective that membership has now grown to 116 of the 130 municipalities in the region.

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NORTH CAROLINA

Developing Practical Approaches to Economic Development: Small Communities Rural Leadership Initiative

Many small communities in western North Carolina lack the professional staff and large leadership base needed to develop a sustainable economy. The Small Communities Rural Leadership Initiative, established and coordinated by HandMade in America, is developing practical new approaches to economic development. Participants learn a systematic approach to project management, how to build a leadership base, and ways to involve the broader community in an inclusive, collaborative process. While participating in training sessions over a full year, they plan and conduct local community projects with assistance from the Initiative, using their new leadership skills to recruit others. Training and project activities are helping create a long-term leadership corps for participating towns and encouraging cooperation between them. In addition, the models developed in these towns are being made available to other communities throughout 21 western North Carolina counties.

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REDI for the Future: North Carolina Rural Economic Development Institute

Many rural communities are discovering, or rediscovering that the best solutions to their economic troubles are local solutions. Although rural North Carolina enjoys a rich tradition of active local leadership, leaders today are being asked to face unprecedented economic challenges. In order to revive and prosper, rural communities of the future need leaders who are prepared to meet these challenges. To prepare a broad, diverse group of rural leaders with the knowledge and skills necessary to manage economic transitions in their communities and promote sustained development, the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center established its first Rural Economic Development Institute in 1989. Today, over 500 people have graduated from the program. Participants in the institute come from a broad range of professionals and volunteers who are selected based on their applications for admission. Participants complete three rigorous instruction sessions that focus on improv-

ing people skills, learning the building blocks of successful economic development, and implementing strategies—the "how to's"—including coalition building and conflict management. The program's alumni form a mentoring network for the new graduates.

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OHIO

TURNING CAMPUSES INTO YOUTH COMMUNITY CENTERS: KIDS ON CAMPUS

Begun in 1996 to meet the needs of local elementary school children in southern Ohio, the summer Kids on Campus programs at the University of Ohio and Hocking College have directly benefited over 1,500 children from five school districts in Athens County each year. The programs also have proven to be excellent leadership training opportunities for parents, high school students, and college volunteers. Before each summer session, certified teachers, parent-teacher aides, high school students, and college work-study students are trained in leadership, conflict resolution, and team building. As teams, teachers, parent-teacher aides, student volunteers, and children then work together during the six-week camp. The program features math and science programs; literacy improvement activities; computer science classes; fine arts and music therapy; health education activities; and role playing in problem solving and conflict resolution. Students receive daily meals and full physical assessments which includes hearing and vision screening. Follow-up activities include at least three one-day programs for the students during the following school year. Recently, the program has been expanded to provide after-school activities during the regular school year.

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Helping a Community Become More Self-Sufficient: CommUNITY Pride Program

Interested residents in the east Jackson community of Pike County took part in the Appalachian Regional Commission's Appalachian Community Learning Project in 1997, seeking ways to improve the quality of life in their rural area. Participants initially emphasized activities to discourage substance abuse and promote responsible behavior among young people in the community. Soon a number of additional projects were identified, including high school graduation general equivalency degree (GED) classes, tutoring programs, emergency food distribution, and other activities. In order to further these programs, and provide a focus for ongoing community improvement, residents decided to build a community center. Using grant funds only for materials, the community provided all construction services and labor to build a 2,160-square-foot facility. CommUNITY Pride has established specific goals for its community center programs, including increased participation in GED classes, increased employment for welfare-to-work participants, and increased food distributions.

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Increasing Philanthropic Support for Local Communities: Foundation for Appalachian Ohio

Recognizing that Appalachian Ohio's 29 counties have received relatively little support from charitable institutions over the years, the Foundation for Appalachian Ohio was established in 1998 to become a voice for local communities among philanthropic institutions both in Ohio and nationwide. The foundation seeks to expand the region's store of financial, human, and organizational capital and encourage stewardship of land, history, resources, and traditions. Now in its second year, it also has begun to serve as a focal point for regional collaboration and coordination.

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GOAL THREE PROJECTS

Providing Hands-on Training at the Local Level: Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development

Based in Athens County, the Corporation for Ohio Appalachian Development (COAD) is a private, nonprofit organization representing 17 Community Action Agencies serving 30 counties. COAD provides a forum for collaboration and coordination among local providers assisting elderly and low-income individuals and families. COAD also seeks to improve the leadership and management capabilities of local governments and organizations serving local communities. Its Appalachian Leadership Initiative is a hands-on training program for middle management staff, giving professional development opportunities to community action, economic development, local government, and nonprofit agency professionals.

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Creating a Public Service Laboratory for Local Communities: Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development

Since 1981, this Ohio University-based program has expanded the capacity of governments and nonprofit agencies to serve Appalachia's 29 Ohio counties. Functioning as a public service educational laboratory, the Institute for Local Government Administration and Rural Development (ILGARD) has provided small communities the same access to applied research and technical assistance as larger, wealthier communities. The assistance includes geographic information, data, training, survey research, strategic planning, facilitation, and evaluation services. Staff and students work on 30 to 35 projects a year. One typical effort has been the highly regarded 116-square-mile Monday Creek Watershed, a top state environmental restoration project. ILGARD helped establish a priority list of problems, coordinated volunteer projects, and used its Geographic Information System (GIS) capabilities to create interactive maps of the watershed. ILGARD studies have highlighted numerous issues and led to other regional initiatives, such as the Ohio Appalachian Center for Higher Education.

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PENNSYLVANIA

Providing a Vision for Local Leadership: Greene County Strategic Plan

Financial aid cannot turn around a distressed area, absent local civic leadership and institutions with the capacity to meet social, educational, and economic needs. This is recognized in the Greene County Strategic Plan, key portions of which have already been realized since its development in 1997. The plan included a community leadership vision for economic development; a strength, weakness, opportunity, and threat analysis of the county; a specific action plan for industry retention, incubation, and expansion; a priority assessment of sites and infrastructure; an analysis of the county's resources to implement the plan; and a detailed workplan and timeline. By recognizing and working to meet the central requirement for civic leadership, Greene County officials are well on their way to achieving the plan's goals and timelines, while increasing private sector confidence and investment.

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SOUTH CAROLINA

Building New Alliances for Growth: Appalachian Regional Economic Development Partnership

Across the six counties of Appalachian South Carolina, economic growth and regional infrastructure projects have linked formerly independent communities. In recent years, local officials have come to see the benefits of tackling infrastructure, economic development, and environmental challenges on a regional scale. As the communities of the region grow closer together, impacts and opportunities increasingly cross jurisdictional lines. Through the Appalachian Regional Economic Development Partnership, key leaders were able to identify and take advantage of regional strategies to overcome challenges. Public and private sector leaders worked together to identify issues, establish priorities, and create specific goals and recommendations. The regional recommendations that were developed have been endorsed by numerous state and local entities. As a result, over $100 million has already been allocated or designated for water, wastewater, and transportation infrastructure. An

ongoing regional steering committee oversaw implementation. At this time, approximately five years after the completion of the initial plan, the region is in the process of reformulating the steering committee to identify a second round of projects.

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TENNESSEE

RECOGNIZING COMMUNITY EXCELLENCE: GOVERNOR'S THREE-STAR AWARD PROGRAM

For the past 17 years, the Three-Star Award Program has helped Tennessee communities throughout the state preserve and create new employment opportunities, increase family incomes, improve the quality of life, and create a strong leadership base. The program provides recognition and support to communities as they develop, implement, and continually enhance community development efforts. In order to receive and maintain Three-Star certification, a community must meet basic requirements in organizational development, community development, education and work force development, and economic development. Communities are encouraged to undertake additional, suggested activities within these goal areas. A team of economic and community development professionals evaluates each community's strategy annually. Fifty-seven communities qualified for 1998 Three-Star certification, nearly half were in Appalachian Tennessee.

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VIRGINIA

Helping Grassroots Leaders Help Themselves: Civic Leadership Development

Community improvement and economic development projects depend in large measure on the depth and commitment of leadership in the community. Leadership training was thus a key part of creating and implementing sustainable economic development plans for Penington Gap, Jonesville, and Dante-small communities in southwestern Virginia. Grassroots leaders from these towns participated in a program developed by the Coalition for Jobs and the Environment. Participants received leadership skills training, including, among other activities, how to organize; build community consensus; develop strategic plans; analyze the economic feasibility of projects; secure government endorsements of specific proposals; and involve other civic and community leaders in the process. Teams from all three towns met together, comparing experiences and learning from each other, as well as from other communities that had prior experience in similar efforts. By blending economic development and leadership training, the project increased the likelihood for successful economic development while building a core leadership group for other community challenges.

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WEST VIRGINIA

Mixing Fun with Youth Leadership Training: Camp Horseshoe

Students at the Ohio–West Virginia High School YMCA (HI-Y) Leadership Center are not through with their program at the end of camp. They go home motivated to make their communities better. Those participating in a special leadership and civic development initiative must work at least 25 hours in community service. Students have tutored, worked on a Rails-to-Trails project, helped seniors, and raised money so other students could attend Camp Horseshoe. Civic training for West Virginia students culminates with an annual Youth in Government program at the state capitol in Charleston. Economic and business leadership is also developed at Camp Horseshoe; the Free Enterprise Conference, held annually since 1978, has been expanded this year with new emphasis on entrepreneurial skills and experience.

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GOAL FOUR

Dynamic Local Economies

Appalachian residents will have access to financial and technical resources to help build dynamic and self-sustaining local economies.

ALABAMA

Helping Local Companies Compete Worldwide: Project TEAM Training Program

Wood products, apparel, and processed food companies accounted for over 40 percent of Alabama's manufacturing jobs in recent years, but only about 13 percent of the state's exports. Small and medium-sized Appalachian firms in those industries were initial candidates for the Targeted Export Assistance and Management (TEAM) export assistance project at the University of Alabama's International Trade Center. Many strong, successful companies were interested in exporting, but were intimidated by basic questions, such as how to ship, how to receive payment, or how to respond to foreign price queries. Companies with the organizational and financial capabilities to be successful exporters make a commitment to the program, and in return receive hands-on assistance in entering a new foreign market. In 1997, the program's first year, ten firms exported over $3 million worth of goods. The program continues to add new firms, helping expand markets for business and employees. Now, Alabama-made cookies are on sale in Israel and Alabama food seasonings are sold in Mexico.

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GEORGIA

Using Desktop Videoconferencing as an International Trade Development Tool: RECoN

Starting in 1997, the Georgia Department of Industry, Trade, and Tourism conducted a pilot project to test the value of desktop videoconferencing as a trade promotion tool. Known as RECoN, for the Realtime Export Conferencing Network, the project was co-supported by the State of Georgia, the U.S. Department of Commerce, and Appalachian Regional Commission. During the project's pilot phase, Georgia installed and operated 28 video sites in Atlanta and throughout the state. A variety of trade-related services were introduced, and substantial across-the-board program benefits were demonstrated, including: improved outreach, training, project coordination, and access to services by rural companies. The project also generated a great deal of practical information on how best to employ videoconferencing within a trade program. As a result of the pilot program's success, the U.S. Department of Commerce, in cooperation with several states, has now adopted it as a template for its own global deployment of a much larger trade videoconferencing network, which now includes

over 150 sites throughout the U.S. and more than 20 countries. Other interested states and organizations are invited to join this rapidly expanding network. (www.recon.net)

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MARYLAND

TURNING EXPERIENCE INTO LOCAL HIGH-TECH CAREERS: ENTREPRENEURSHIP INTERNSHIP PLACEMENT PROGRAM

New college graduates are increasingly expected to have real work experience in their field. Many students, however, cannot afford to take unpaid internships even though internships can be a key to future career success. At the same time many entrepreneurial Maryland companies, particularly in western Maryland, could benefit from having student interns, but are unable to pay them. The new Frostburg Entrepreneurial Internship Project, in Allegany County, is placing 20–25 students a year with small entrepreneurial firms, where they have a greater chance for enriching job experiences. Although the program has just begun, graduates have already found full-time employment with host companies. The Entrepreneurial Project is expected to retain college graduates in the area, thereby increasing the supply of qualified employees and encouraging further investment and economic growth.

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THINKING BIG WITH SMALL LOANS: WEST REGIONAL SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CENTER (SBDC) REVOLVING MICRO LOAN FUND

A Revolving Micro Loan Fund has been established to encourage community business investment in Allegany and Washington Counties, providing prime interest rate loans of $10,000 or less for qualifying small business start-ups or expansions. Loan recipients are often individuals who cannot qualify for traditional business loans even though their budding businesses shows promise. Besides a loan, these recipients also receive technical assistance and counseling to help them manage their new or expanding enterprise. The initiative in its first year has already helped a

handful of new businesses get off the ground. As principle and interest are paid back, the revolving fund, begun in 1998 with an initial capitalization of $80,000, will continue to serve the local small business community.

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SUPPORTING NEW ENTREPRENEURS: MICRO BUSINESS PARTNERSHIP

Business loans are just part of the help available to make new Garrett County small businesses a success. Under the Micro/Works entrepreneurial initiative, begun last year, individuals wanting to start a small business can take classes and receive technical assistance in cooperation with the Garrett Community College Small Business Development Center and the University of Maryland Cooperative Extension Service. Personalized support and social services to overcome individual barriers also are provided, if needed. Networking and peer counseling are both available through the Garrett County Chamber of Commerce, another partner in the comprehensive effort to increase entrepreneurial activity and success. So far, nine loans averaging $10,000 have been made from the revolving loan fund for new business start-ups or expansions.

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LONG-TERM INVESTMENT PAYS OFF: TRI-COUNTY COUNCIL FOR WESTERN MARYLAND REVOLVING LOAN FUND

When this new revolving loan fund was set up in 1985, no one knew for sure how great the need would be or how successful newly funded companies would become. In the past 14 years, over 40 business start-ups and expansions have been funded in the manufacturing, retail, construction, and food service industries. Approximately $2.3 million in loans have leveraged another $16.7 million of private investment in Allegany, Garrett, and Washington Counties. Almost 600 jobs have been created or preserved, generating continuing income and economic growth in the region.

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GOAL FOUR PROJECTS

NEW YORK

Bridging the Funding Gap: Regional Economic Development and Energy Corporation Regional Revolving Loan Fund

Even in a booming economy, local lending institutions are often reluctant to finance small business start-ups. Government-sponsored revolving loans fill a critical financing gap in many areas, such as Chemung, Schuyler, and Steuben Counties, where a regional revolving loan fund has been helping finance business development projects since 1980. The Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC) provided $1.3 million in capitalization, and over the next 18 years the fund disbursed over $4.2 million in ARC loans. These loans leveraged over $36.8 million in private investment, principally for industrial manufacturing and commercial businesses. By working closely with other agencies and private lenders, and by requiring non-ARC funds for at least 50 percent of project financing, the success rate for funded projects has been kept high. Thirty-three of 34 enterprises funded in the past five years are still in operation, employing over 700 people.

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Creating New Markets for Family Farmers: Southern Tier Small Farm Expansion Initiative

Several years ago, as farming continued to consolidate into fewer, larger producers, farm development officials in New York saw great potential for smaller producers in emerging local and urban specialty markets. Unfortunately, many small operators were unaware of the opportunity. The Southern Tier Small Farm Expansion Initiative provided information and technical assistance to farmers in eight southern New York counties, helping to reestablish a demand for grass-fed veal and establish a pastured poultry industry in the region. The initiative also helped start new and existing beef, goat, and sheep producers to identify targeted markets. With the assistance of the project, which provided consistent up-to-date market information to producers, farmers now sell meat products including "meadow raised veal" in local and regional markets and restaurants. Over 50 farmers now produce pastured poultry in this expanding specialty agricultural industry.

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NORTH CAROLINA

Partnership Means Success: Southwestern North Carolina Revolving Loan Fund

A comprehensive partnership with supporting institutions ensures success for this revolving loan fund, administered by the Southwestern North Carolina Planning and Economic Development Commission. The Commission works closely with its partners in a seven-county region, including business and technology centers at area colleges; the state Department of Commerce; commercial banks and lenders; and non-traditional lenders including the Self-Help Credit Union and the Mountain Microenterprise Fund.

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Bringing a Community Together to Chart a New Course: Haywood County Economic Adjustment Strategy Effort

In 1989, substantial layoffs in the manufacturing sector threatened the economic viability of Haywood County. In response, local leaders joined representatives of industry, labor, government and education to consider ways to strengthen and diversify the community's economic base. The resulting strategic plan has fostered road improvements, site acquisition, and development of two industrial parks, new and expanding industries, and a new, entrepreneurial-centered community college curriculum. The model is being explored as a strategy for aiding other counties facing significant losses of manufacturing jobs.

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GOAL FOUR PROJECTS

OHIO

Helping a Woman-Owned Business Expand: Revolving Loan Fund Assistance for MACA Plastics

MACA Plastics, Inc., is a female-owned and operated plastic injection molding manufacturing firm in Adams County, Ohio. When it needed additional funding to expand its operations in 1995, the Ohio Valley Regional Development Commission agreed to participate in a financing package which also involved private lending and owner equity. The expansion created 18 new jobs and was so successful that the loan was paid in full by March 1997. The company now employs 125 people and continues to grow and thrive as a major employer in the region.

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PENNSYLVANIA

Creating Partnerships for Small Business Growth: TEAM Pennsylvania Entrepreneurial Network Initiative

Although there is above-average entrepreneurial activity in some counties of Appalachian Pennsylvania, much of it takes place in the poorest and most isolated areas, often because there are few nearby jobs. It is entrepreneurship by necessity. To build entrepreneurial strength throughout all of its Appalachian counties and encourage development of more homegrown businesses, Pennsylvania is providing assistance through networks of private and public organizations serving entrepreneurs and small businesses in seven local development districts. A "Training the Trainers" program ensures that participating organizations and financial institutions understand current resources and regulations. Another part of the initiative has provided two-day business finance seminars to Ben Franklin Challenge Grant recipients and small business incubator clients.

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Putting it All Together: Small Business Development Center Outreach Program

Until three years ago residents seeking to start or expand businesses in Greene County had little immediate access to local business information, counseling, or assistance in planning and financing. But now, the University of Pittsburgh is helping Greene County implement a key part of its strategic economic development plan. An outreach office was launched in late 1996, open one day a week. Despite its limited operation, the office assisted over 70 residents and helped six clients receive almost $1.5 million in financing in its first year. The outreach office became full-time in 1998 and continues to provide one-on-one business management counseling, as well as informational and educational programs of interest to growing numbers of start-up or small business owners. Community involvement makes the outreach effort more successful. The Small Business Development Center (SBDC) is an active member of the local Chamber of Commerce, and its local coordinator is part of numerous local work-groups. The local coordinator also has been appointed county representative for several regional activities.

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TENNESSEE

Using High-Tech Resources to Help Entrepreneurs: Technology 2020

When Oak Ridge National Laboratory was established as the country's principal research and development site for nuclear weapons technology, the region became almost totally dependent on federal government jobs. Local community leaders began trying to diversify the local economy in the early 1980s with the Valley Industrial Park, now home to several technology-based firms. The end of the Cold War brought new urgency to their mission. Serving all of Tennessee's Appalachian counties, including ten distressed counties, Technology 2020 is a new public-private partnership, providing access to capital and business assistance for entrepreneurs, and encouraging commercial development of Oak Ridge-related technology. A micro loan fund has been established for fledgling firms and a Small Business Investment Corporation will provide equity capital for qualified larger and expanding enterprises. The push for regional entrepreneurial development is still a race against time. An estimated 7,000 federally related local jobs could be lost over the next decade as nuclear-facility downsizing continues.

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GOAL FOUR PROJECTS

Providing New Hope for Inner City Jobs: Southeast Tennessee Cavalier Corporation Development Project

New ownership had revitalized a soft drink vending machine manufacturer, which had started making ice boxes in the 1800s and then prospered with Coca-Cola and Pepsi-Cola before falling on hard times in the 1980s. But the firm's manufacturing facility was small, unable to meet existing demand, and the surrounding property was environmentally contaminated. The Cavalier Corporation agreed to transfer its property to the city of Chattanooga and Hamilton County, which with Appalachian Regional Commission assistance undertook environmental remediation and created the new Inner City Industrial Park. Cavalier has become the anchor tenant for the park, which now has more space for expansion. Environmental cleanup freed an additional six acres for future industrial use.

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VIRGINIA

A Unique Approach to Small Town Revitalization: Small Business Incubator at Narrows

The Town of Narrows in Giles County is fighting economic decline in a unique way. When downtown business withered due to retail competition from nearby Princeton, West Virginia, town officials decided to make a new small business incubator the centerpiece of a $1.26 million downtown redevelopment plan. The project was undertaken with support from the New River Valley Planning District Commission and a citizen steering committee. Today, a two-story incubator building, formerly a car dealership, offers budding businesses retail space, office suites, and nine light manufacturing areas. The incubator works closely with the New River Valley Competitiveness Center, another incubator in neighboring Pulaski County, and provides services and technical assistance to start-up firms. High school students participating in the "Serve, Learn, and Earn" program of the Giles County Partnership can also work at the site. The incubator also hopes to work with the Rural Entrepreneurship through Action Learning (REAL) program in the future.

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WEST VIRGINIA

Bringing Europe to Appalachia: A Regional Tourism Promotion

Tourism is a vital part of a dynamic economy. It is particularly important in rural areas of Appalachia because it supplements the local economy through expenditures of funds from outside the Region. Recognizing that more repeat foreign visitors, in particular Germans, were traveling to the United States, the tourism offices of West Virginia, Ohio, and Kentucky began a special coordinated effort in 1994 to promote Appalachia as an exciting and fun-filled tourism destination. Immediate steps were taken to educate and create an awareness of the Appalachian Mountain and River Region for tour operators and travel agents, while at the same time hosting trade media in the region in exchange for free coverage in German newspapers, magazines, radio, and television. Seminars were held in the three states to better prepare the tourism industries for international visitors. An Internet site, www.travelappalachia.com, provides travel information and links to the states' partners. Already the regional tourism project has more than met its goals. There is new international awareness of the region as a travel destination, more foreign visitors, and a local tourism industry increasingly attuned to the needs of expanding their own international marketing.

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GOAL FIVE

Health Care

Appalachian residents will have access to affordable, quality health care.

ALABAMA

Expediting Emergency Care for Infants: Carraway Life Saver Program

Children born in remote, rural counties of Appalachian Alabama are often several hours away from critical neonatal care facilities in Birmingham. To improve health care services for premature and critically ill infants in these counties, the Appalachian Regional Commission is supporting a collaborative effort to expand the Carraway Life Saver Program and provide emergency air transport by helicopter for premature and critically ill infants in remote, rural areas. Available to all "at risk" children in Appalachian Alabama, the service is a joint effort between Carraway Methodist Health Systems and the Children's Hospital of Alabama. During the past year, an estimated 50 children have flown from Appalachian counties to the Children's Hospital and to the Carraway Neonatal Center. Both hospitals are located in Birmingham. Providing air transport by helicopter has helped to reduce delays in providing life-saving medical care to children.

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MISSISSIPPI

Improving Health Care Amid Severe Rural Poverty: Hickory Flat Clinic

In 1978 the only health care in Hickory Flat, a small town in Benton County, was provided by a public health nurse, one day a month, in one room of a dilapidated clinic building. A community committee, established that year with Appalachian Regional Commission funding and technical assistance, soon organized as the Hickory Flat Clinic Association to rehabilitate, properly equip, and operate the old clinic. A full-time nurse practitioner was hired, and the renovated clinic reopened in 1979. Over the years, the clinic has become a mainstay of health care in this extremely distressed area of northern Mississippi. An infant mortality project includes classroom education by a clinic nurse practitioner, who also serves as health teacher at the Hickory Flat School. The Hickory Flat Clinic averages 3,500 patient visits each year and also provides home health visits and periodic community health screenings. It is a model for other community clinics and has provided clinic experience and training for over 40 new nurse practitioners.

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GOAL FIVE PROJECTS

NEW YORK

Using Technology to Expand Health Care: TeleHome Care Project

In Southeastern New York, home health care can be costly for those confined to their homes by chronic or terminal illnesses. Community-based nurses cannot provide the optimal number of home visits because of heavy caseloads, strained resources, and long distances. With the help of a recent Appalachian Regional Commission grant, Delaware, Ostego, and Schoharie Counties are working to remedy the problem. Using televisions and telephones, homebound patients and their nurses will soon be able to conduct "telehome" visits, allowing healthcare professionals to monitor a patient's condition via a video system. These "video visits" require only a fraction of the time and money needed for at-home monitoring, allowing nurses to consult with a greater number of patients over the system. The grant provides funds to train more than 70 health care professionals at four clinics and three hospital emergency rooms for this service, which is expected to benefit over 600 patients.

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NORTH CAROLINA

Creating a Model for Community Health Care: Hot Springs Health Program

Providing health care through a community corporation was a new idea in the early 1970s; so was using nurse practitioners and physician assistants as primary clinic staff. Launched by two nurses in 1971, Madison County's Hot Springs Health Program proved a trailblazer and model for many other communities. A five-year grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission in 1972 helped firm up finances. The program, originally housed in a small, formerly abandoned physician's office, now includes multiple medical and dental clinics and a staff of over 140, including over ten physicians. It is the sole provider of primary care in the county and a principal area employer. Hot Springs has evolved through the years. In 1986 the board of directors decided the program should become self-supporting. Yet it remains a community-based organization providing the first line of care to residents who once had no community health services at all.

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Sharing Health Information to Improve Care: Electronic Ambulance Call Reporting System

In northwestern North Carolina, Emergency Medical Service (EMS) providers frequently are not able to make informed decisions concerning a patient's pre-hospital care because medical records are not shared among the region's health programs. A lack of data concerning pre-hospital medical treatment has led to more expensive, less efficient patient care throughout the state's Appalachian counties. Through a grant from the Appalachian Regional Commission, local health officials are working to develop a new telehealth database that will allow EMS and hospital administrators to distribute data concerning pre-hospital medical treatment throughout a five-county area. Patient information will be transported via the Internet into a virtual private network database, saving costs, improving the delivery of services, and coordinating health programs.

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OHIO

Providing Dental Care to Low-Income Residents: Southeast Ohio Dental Clinic

With assistance from the Appalachian Regional Commission (ARC), the Southeastern Ohio Dental Clinic in Washington County was created as a full-service clinic providing corrective and preventive dental services to low-income residents who have no other access to dental care. Serving residents of Morgan and Washington Counties, the clinic employs a dentist, dental hygienist, and dental assistant and handles more than 4,900 patient visits a year. The program has strong community support, with ARC funding matched 2-to-1 by local and state funding.

Contact:
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Executive Director
Community Action Program Corporation
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Marietta, Ohio 45750
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GOAL FIVE PROJECTS

TENNESSEE

Meeting a Critical Health Need: Cocke County Dental Clinic

In the 1996–97 school year, an oral health assessment of school children in Cocke County found rates of tooth decay 67 percent higher than in other counties of the region. Almost 30 percent needed restorative or surgical treatment. These needs were not surprising given the county's poor education and poverty levels, indicators that frequently correlate with poor dental health. Clinical dental services at the County Health Department were first launched in 1991; a second dentist was added in 1997. To underscore the importance of the two dentists, county officials note that the two are the only dental providers in the county for TennCare, the state managed care program in which almost 40 percent of all county residents are enrolled. The Cocke County Dental program includes education and preventive treatment, and serves an average of 60 patients each month.

Contact:
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Cocke County Health Department
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Newport, Tennessee 37821
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WEST VIRGINIA

Improving Health Through Targeted Programs: McDowell County Rural Health Initiative

With support from the Appalachian Regional Commission, state and local health officials have launched a coordinated effort to improve health care in McDowell County, one of the poorest counties in the state. The project is composed of four health care initiatives: a free pharmaceutical program for uninsured and low-income residents, a folic acid education pilot program for women of child-bearing age, a children's health outreach program, and an emergency medical services communications enhancement program. State officials view the health initiatives as part of a larger, comprehensive effort to address the county's economic and human development needs. Together, the initiatives are expected to reach as many as 12,000 county residents in the first year.

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